

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Warren Michio Osako

Warren Michio Osako, youngest of four children, was born in 1946 in Lānaʻi City, Lānaʻi. His parents, Mitsue and Yoshikazu Osako, originally from Hawaiʻi Island, moved to Lānaʻi in 1937. In the early years, his mother worked as a maid in a plantation manager's home, later she worked at the Lānaʻi Post Office. His father worked as a foreman in the Hawaiian Pineapple Company's machine shop where machinery was repaired and fabricated for plantation use.

Warren Osako attended grades K-8 at Lānaʻi High and Elementary School. In 1960, he began his high school years at Oʻahu's Mid-Pacific Institute. Graduating in 1964, he completed college courses in California and Hawaiʻi, later earning a degree in Anthropology from the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa.

During his youth and young adulthood, he worked summers on Lānaʻi: picking pineapple, doing field surveys, and driving a delivery truck for Pine Isle Market.

While in the U.S. Army, 1966–1969, he received language-training in Korean and was stationed in Korea.

From 1970 to 2004, he was employed as a flight attendant by United Airlines.

Retired and residing in Lānaʻi, Warren Osako is a volunteer at the Lānaʻi Culture and Heritage Center. He also serves on the Maui County Cultural Resources Commission.

Tape No. 56-44-1-14

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Warren Osako (WO)

Lānaʻi City, Lānaʻi

July 1, 2014

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, we're going to start. Today is July 1, 2014. This is Warren Nishimoto, and I'm interviewing Warren Osako. Warren, what's your middle name?

WO: Michio.

WN: Michio, okay. Interviewing Warren Osako for the Lānaʻi City oral history project, and we're at his home in Lānaʻi City, Lānaʻi.

So, Warren, first question I have for you.

WO: Yes.

WN: The year you were born.

WO: The year I was born, 1946.

WN: Okay, and where were you born?

WO: In Lānaʻi City.

WN: And what were your parents' names?

WO: My father was Yoshikazu Osako, and my mother was Mitsue, and her maiden name was Yamato.

WN: Okay. Now, tell me, you were born in Lānaʻi City. What were your parents doing in Lānaʻi City? Tell me some background as to how they got here.

WO: My parents were originally on the Big Island, Pāʻauhau. And then, my father, I guess, for a while was in Honokaʻa, which is right next. He worked for the sugar plantation there. I guess one of my uncles had moved over here, and they came and visited, and he told them it was okay, and the pay was more than what the sugar plantation paid. So, they made the move and came over here, I think, in 1937. So, my two older siblings were born on the Big Island, and then the sister right above me and I were—we were born on Lānaʻi.

WN: I don't know if you can answer this, but did he ever tell you stories as to the differences between living in Pāʻauhau and Lānaʻi, and why he came to Lānaʻi in the first place?

- WO: Well, I think basically because they got paid more here.
- WN: Pineapple was paying more than sugar?
- WO: Yeah. I think that's how they got their workers, yeah? Because sugar was established.
- WN: So, 1937?
- WO: Yeah.
- WN: And when he came here, what was his first job?
- WO: He was a machinist. Eventually, he became a foreman, so he was not doing too much hands-on work, but you know, more like running the shop. They fabricated a lot of their machinery and repairs, and I think, you know, they developed a lot of things because pineapple was different from Mainland kind of ag[riculture]. So, they had to develop machinery that would work for pineapple.
- WN: And your father's parents; where are they from?
- WO: My father's parents were from Yamaguchi-*ken* in Japan. Actually, on one of the small offshore islands that today, the population has grown really small. My nephew went there a couple of years ago, and they don't even have a school there anymore, because the population is moving away and just older people live there.
- WN: I would think it would be the opposite, yeah? More people moving in.
- WO: Yeah. So, you know, I think the main industry there was fishing. I've never been there, but it sounds like the population, everybody's moving to the main part of Japan. Especially the younger people, I mean, for jobs and stuff.
- WN: Did your father go to school in Honoka'a?
- WO: Yeah, my father went to school until the eighth grade, I think. But he was the oldest son, so then he had to help support the family. There were eight siblings.
- WN: Oldest of eight?
- WO: Yeah.
- WN: Wow.
- WO: Well, oldest son. He was third, I think. He had two sisters older than him.
- WN: And do you know what your grandparents were doing in Honoka'a, what kind of work?
- WO: Yeah, working for the plantation [Honoka'a Sugar Company], basically.
- WN: Okay. So then, they moved to Lāna'i in 1937. You were born in 1946. And you're the youngest of how many kids?
- WO: Four.

WN: Four kids.

WO: Yeah, I'm the youngest, and there's a pretty big gap between me and the sister closest to me, eight years.

WN: Who was also born in Lānaʻi City?

WO: She was born in Lānaʻi.

My mother's family, they were from Niigata. Not in the big city, but outside, small village. My grandparents eventually went back. Actually, my grandmother, who I never met, by the way, I guess her health wasn't so good, so then she took the youngest daughter and went back to Japan. Then, while they were there, the war [World War II] started, so then they couldn't come back. My grandmother eventually passed away, but my aunt eventually just stayed there and never came back. I mean, she's been back for a visit, but never came back to live in Hawaiʻi. Eventually, my grandfather went back to Japan. So, they're both buried over there.

WN: So, both your mother's side and father's side were both in Pāʻauhau?

WO: Yeah.

WN: Okay. Lānaʻi City, 1946. Where was your first house? If you remember.

WO: The first house was on the corner of, let's see, I think that's Tenth and Pālāwai. So that's several blocks in that direction. It was one of the little two-bedroom houses, the little square ones. If you drive around, you'll see most of them, the older ones. By the time I came along, you know, they had attached a lean-to [to the house], so we had our own bathroom and everything. But I always used to get the stories of I'm lucky, because before they had like, community bathhouse and that kind of thing. From what I understand, it wasn't there by the time I remember, but it was right across the road from our house. I guess my parents used to take care of it, and they would earn a little extra money for taking care [of the community bathhouse].

WN: Oh, you mean, take care of the bathhouse?

WO: Yeah.

WN: So, that was like your mother's job, or . . .

WO: I think mostly, yeah, because my father had a full-time [job]. I know that even when I was young, a lot of the ladies would do laundry for the single men, and stuff like that. You know, bring in extra money.

WN: And your father being a machinist, was that considered like a little bit . . .

WO: Yeah, I guess skilled job, yeah, not just labor.

WN: And where you folks lived, was that an area where there were more skilled laborers, or anything like that?

WO: No, I think it was pretty mixed. All kinds. (chuckles) Well, during my time, anyway, that I remember. We had one family, the father—their name was Mendes, so he was mixed. I don't know, you know, like some kind of Spanish, I don't know, or Portuguese or something, and the

mother was Japanese. Then, we had some Filipino families on the street. So, you know, it was pretty mixed.

WN: And most of your neighbors and stuff, I'm sure they worked for the . . .

WO: They all worked for the [Hawaiian Pineapple Company] plantation. You know, some of the women worked in the stores rather than on the plantation [i.e., in the pineapple fields]. But yeah, even those days, you know, when I was young, a lot of the women worked on the plantation, too.

WN: Where did your father work? I mean, was there a machine shop?

WO: Remember when I parked and I said . . .

WN: Yeah.

WO: The [maintenance] shops were all in there.

WN: Oh, okay.

WO: The machine shop, the auto shop. You know, so they did all the work that they needed to, that kind of work, over there.

WN: You mean, like the harvesting machines and all . . .

WO: Yeah, any kind of major repairs they couldn't do in the field were done over there.

WN: So, when you said that your parents helped maintain the community bathhouse, like what did they have to do?

WO: Oh, I guess clean. Somebody had to heat the water. They didn't have water heaters like now, automatic. In fact, in the house that we lived in, the water heater and the stove were both kerosene. So, in the backyard had a fifty-five-gallon drum, and they would come every so often to fill it. The water heater and the stove, you know, you had to light it. So, the water heater was my job when I got little bit older, you know, come certain time in the afternoon, you got to light it so got hot water, yeah?

WN: Every day, you had to light it?

WO: Yeah.

WN: Wow.

WO: Yeah, because if you leave it burning, you're going burn a lot of kerosene, right?

WN: True, true.

WO: I don't know what they actually got paid, but when my father bought this house and lot, which of course, this is little bit different now . . .

WN: Oh, this one right here?

WO: Yeah.

WN: Okay.

WO: And we moved over here, I think he paid about three thousand dollars.

WN: I'm not going to ask you how much it's worth now. (Chuckles)

WO: Then, you know, when I was older sometime, he was telling me that. Being a cocky kid, I said, "Oh, Dad, find me ten, I pay cash." (Chuckles) But, you know, I guess the pay was low, so everything cost less. I mean, we had stores and stuff, but they could also order stuff through the company storeroom, because I still remember when we were kids, we used to get the cases of Dole juices and stuff that they could purchase from the company.

WN: So, the community bath—getting back to that. So, you folks didn't have to use it.

WO: No.

WN: Because you folks had your own.

WO: Yeah. By the time I came around, yeah, they had added to the houses.

WN: But others still used the community bathhouse? There were some other families . . .

WO: No. The only place that I remember that still was, this area, were the single guys. In fact, my oldest sister, her husband, before they got married, they used to live in one of these houses around here, and you know, they still had a community bath. But all the other houses by then had bathrooms.

WN: And when did you folks move to this house?

WO: Mm . . . I would say when I was about fifth grade.

WN: So, if you can try describe this area, growing up in this area from fifth grade; what was that like? I mean, you folks were not far from the machine shop where you father worked.

WO: Right. But, you know, we lived with the noise, right? I don't know if you ever been here when the plantation was still in operation. But early in the morning, depending on the [harvesting] season, when work started, the whistle would blow. I mean, if you had visitors, they'd levitate off the bed, because it was loud.

(Laughter)

WO: And so, it would blow to wake people—well, more to let people know that there was going to be work that day. Or if, you know, had too much rain and was too muddy, then the whistle didn't blow, they knew they weren't going to work that day. *Pau hana* time, the whistle would blow, too. When we were kids, they even had like a siren thing, eight o'clock, like curfew, kind of (chuckles) for the kids to be—supposed to be home.

WN: So, the morning and afternoon whistle from the company was a whistle.

WO: Yeah.

WN: Sounded like a whistle?

WO: Yeah. Very loud steam whistle.

WN: Oh, steam whistle.

WO: Yeah. Used to be on top one of the buildings, you know, right there.

WN: You guys were right close to it.

WO: Yeah. I mean, we were always close to it. So, you get used to it (chuckles).

WN: And then, the siren, where did that come from?

WO: Same place.

WN: And that was more like a civil defense kind of siren that you hear nowadays?

WO: Yeah. Not as loud, I don't think. But because the civil defense one is right here, a block away, right on the corner across from the service station, that one is very loud. (Chuckles) And you got to imagine that when I was growing up, the town was smaller. Where the road goes down to the airport, all the houses on that side weren't there, and that was later. Even down by the school, that area, a lot of it wasn't there. Even when I was at the school, you know, we had the summer program for the school kids. They said, "Oh, we're lower campus." And then, what's lower campus? (Chuckles) Where they built new classrooms, you know, that was all [pineapple] fields before.

WN: You mean, at the old school?

WO: Yeah. You know, where I went elementary school. . . . Well, in high school too, though, but you know, I went to Mid-Pacific [Institute] on O'ahu. But that [lower part of the school campus] was all fields, but I hadn't been down there in a long time, so I wasn't familiar. And these were fairly recent, I think, within four or five years they were built. So, [the school] expanded. I know that even that end of town, because I had friends that lived over there, the lower part, you know, level with the school going out that . . .

WN: This is the current school?

WO: Yeah. Only have one school. But during my time, yeah, it's still the same.

WN: Because they moved, right?

WO: Originally, yeah.

WN: By Cavendish [Golf Course]?

WO: Yeah, but that was way before my time.

WN: Right, right.

WO: And you know, my friends were [living] on the end, so the pineapple field was right [there]. Your backyard was here, and then had a dirt road, and then there was the pineapple field. A lot of them were like that. I know when we used to go back to the Big Island and visit relatives, my one

uncle, same thing. His backyard was here, and the cane field was right against his backyard. It's different now, because you don't have the pineapple fields.

WN: So, were you allowed to go pick pineapple?

WO: I don't know if we were allowed, but everybody did.

(Laughter)

WO: Nobody said anything. (Chuckles) We did, and so I was used to doing that. I know visiting my uncle on the Big Island, I said, "Oh, I want to go get sugar cane."

He said, "Oh, you cannot, that belongs to the company. You cannot take the sugar cane." But over here, you know, everybody did. You know, if you had visitors, before they went home, you went and picked pineapples and put them in a box for them to take home. (Chuckles) That was regular practice. You know, nobody said anything.

WN: I always thought that Lānaʻi was so strict. You know, the company was very strict.

WO: Oh, I think that the real early years, yeah? Not during my time. The story was, because there were no trees when they started [the plantation]. If you look at the old photos, the trees were just planted. And the plantation manager's house was up on the hill, so supposedly, he could stay up there with the binoculars and see everything that was going on. (Chuckles)

WN: Do you know for a fact that's what happened, or you just . . .

WO: Just hearsay. But they say he was very strict, you know.

WN: This is who, [Dexter] "Blue" Fraser?

WO: Oh, no, before. Wasn't Fraser.

WN: [Harold] Bloomfield-Brown.

WO: Brown, yeah.

WN: Was before your time.

WO: Yeah, Bloomfield-Brown. [Harold Bloomfield-Brown was the first superintendent of Hawaiian Pineapple Company's Lānaʻi Plantation in 1924. He was succeeded by Dexter "Blue" Fraser in 1936.] You know, they said he always wore the riding boots; right? The high boots were all polished. Hearsay again, but they said that if you didn't take care of your yard or it was messy or something, he would go scold you, and stuff like that.

WN: Right, right.

WO: But during my time already, you know, it wasn't like that.

WN: So tell me, what was it like growing up here? What did you do to have good fun, growing up here?

WO: Well, I think we did a lot of make-our-own toys. Like get the old broomstick [handle] and, you know, we used to have a game called *peewee*. You know, you cut [the broomstick handle] up in different shapes and pieces, and play this game. We had marbles. We had lot of hibiscus hedges, and so the tall hibiscus hedge we would cut and make a sword. Old tennis ball, we would cut in half, and that's the hand guard and play sword fights, and stuff like that. We would hike around the countryside. Especially—not in the pineapple fields so much, but when I was growing up, still had the old Charles Gay [residence], where his house was up the hill here, and still had—I mean, the house wasn't there, but had all the fruit trees, and they were leaving it like that. So, you know, that was one of the places we would go. You know, mothers would make the boys mainly, you know, *bentō* and we would go hike up there, play, you know. Eat your lunch, go home.

Then, a lot of the times, especially when I was younger, the women—because dirty, yeah, when you work pineapple field, like that, they used to have the *tarai* and boil the clothes, actually. Make a fire, boil the clothes, and actually got it pretty clean, you know, with the soapy water and stuff.

WN: This is during your time?

WO: Yeah, I remember. That usually was Saturday when they did that. Because they're not working, so they would do the laundry, so us kids would go around the neighborhood, see whatever got. You know, lima beans, sweet potatoes, whatever, and then cook them in the charcoal and ashes, and eat it. So, you know, I guess it was different from growing up in the city, you know. (Chuckles)

WN: So, when they did the laundry and boiled the water in the *tarai*, was that a designated area?

WO: In the backyard. (Chuckles)

WN: So, they put water in the tub, and put it on the open fire?

WO: Well, they had rocks or something to hold it up.

WN: Right. But they put the soap inside?

WO: Yeah.

WN: Wow.

WO: And boiled it, and of course, they still hand-scrubbed too, even though they had those old-style washing machines. Those days—you don't see now, but everybody had clothesline in the backyard. Came with the house (chuckles). Didn't have dryers then, so everything was, you know, hanging the clothes out in the yard on the clothesline.

WN: So, your mother worked, huh?

WO: Oh, yeah. I would say the women worked hard.

WN: Did your sisters help?

WO: Yeah, but because my sisters were older, you know, eight years by the time I kind of remember, they were already gone [from the home]. And then my oldest sister, of course, she stayed here,

she got married, and actually went to UH [University of Hawai‘i] after she got married, and then had a child. But my other sister went to UH. And I really never knew my brother then.

WN: The oldest brother?

WO: My oldest—well, yeah. He was like twelve years older than me.

WN: He was the oldest?

WO: No. My oldest sister, my brother, and another sister. So, he went to Mid-Pac also in Honolulu, and boarded. I don’t think he came back too often, summers like that. He usually worked at the school or something because I don’t remember seeing him too much. Then, of course, after that, he went Mainland to college. So, we didn’t really know each other too much until later.

WN: How old was your father when he had you?

WO: Jeez, my father was born in 1904, so I would have to do math. (Chuckles)

WN: Forty-two.

WO: Yeah, forty-two. And then, my mother was eight years younger, so she was born in 1912.

WN: I think back then, even thirty-four, that’s kind of old to have a child.

WO: Probably, but you know, I was the accident, or they were celebrating the end of World War II. (Chuckles) Because 1946, I was born.

WN: That’s right. You’re the first-year baby boomer.

WO: Baby boomer, yeah. (Chuckles) So there was a separation between me and my siblings. You know, the closest was eight years. And then twelve, and then fifteen years to my oldest sister.

WN: So essentially, you kind of grew up an only child, kind of.

WO: Pretty much, yeah. I mean, my sister was still here, the younger one, the one eight years [older], but still, a big gap, yeah?

WN: So, did you have chores that you had to do around the house?

WO: When I was younger, not much. Even fairly young, I’d light the heater in the afternoon. But that was about it. Later, when I got [older]—when we moved here especially, then I started having more. Did yard work, and stuff like that.

WN: So, who were some of your good friends growing up?

WO: Good friends growing up? One was Alan Yagi, who was same age, and they lived at the house right immediately over there that they just sold recently. He lives on O‘ahu, and the older brother lives in California. There was a couple that were, you know, on the other side of the service station, Del Rosario, Oyama, and then the other way there was the Nobui [family], two brothers that were close to my age. One was my classmate, and one was one year older. They both live on the Mainland now, but the older brother Creighton, he’s here now. He comes and stays, you know, one month, two months when he comes. They still keep the family home, even though

nobody lives here. The one that was my classmate, Lance, over here, he's coming. I think he comes today. Coming [to Lānaʻi] to do some work around the house, and then stay for the reunion. So, he'll be here about a week.

WN: I guess a lot of people, like you and others about your age, you know, you guys hang onto the property, hang onto the house, even though you don't. . . Well, you live here, but some don't. They live in [places like] Honolulu, and then they come over to work [on the house or in the yard].

WO: Yeah. There's been a couple of sales recently. Plus, I guess as you get older, it gets a little bit harder to go back and forth. But yeah, there's people that still do keep the house, and . . .

WN: Bob Hirayama. I just saw him the other day, coming over here.

WO: He comes fairly often. He'll probably be here next week for *O-Bon*.

WN: Yeah, that's right, the eighth, I think.

WO: Yeah. But you know, like some of my classmates, the parents, or at least one of the parents still alive. One couple, their parents are gone, but they were [living] in California and they had bought a home here, and they moved back after they retired. So a lot of people do keep the family home for quite a while. Unless nobody's going to come back, then they sell. But I know one guy, maybe he's about four years older than me, and he was saying, yeah, he's getting to the stage where little bit hard to upkeep the house. So go talk to the siblings, and if nobody wants it, he might sell too. Because, you know, during the time that I grew up and finished school and stuff, the only jobs here mainly were the plantation jobs, yeah? So, you know, most people moved away. Quite a few people live on the Mainland, or O'ahu.

Even now, it's still a one-industry town, right? So now, it's tourism and the hotels. So, if that's not the kind of work you want to do, then little bit difficult. [Larry] Ellison's head guy here [Kurt Matsumoto], he's a Lānaʻi boy, but he commutes. He comes over, stays the workweek, then he goes back to O'ahu. He doesn't per se live here. His family is on O'ahu.

And the mother—I don't know if you had the chance . . .

WN: You're talking about Colbert and . . .

WO: Yeah, Colbert and Kurt [Matsumoto]. The mother [Matsuko Matsumoto] lives on O'ahu now, too.

WN: Yeah, right. We interviewed her for this project.

WO: They still have the family home [on Lānaʻi]. So, I guess when he comes for the workweek, he stays there. Right now, with all the [construction] activity, there's a housing shortage. So I don't know what they're going to do. (Chuckles) A lot of the contractors are commuting daily. You'll probably see, when we drive down the street, the contractor bought an older home that had a big lot. The addition he's putting up is bigger than the old house, and it's going to be like a boarding house for the workers. So, there's been a little bit of talk about that, you know, people that feel it's not the style on Lānaʻi.

- WN: So, like when they were building the hotels in the [19]90s, there are a lot of contractors from O‘ahu coming here?
- WO: Right now there is because they’re doing airport work, too. Major, major work at the airport, extending the runway. Plus basically, the Mānele [Bay] Hotel is closed, I think, or just about, because they’re doing major remodeling.
- WN: Oh, really?
- WO: Yeah.
- WN: That’s the Four Seasons?
- WO: Yeah. They’re doing major remodeling. Supposedly, they’re going to make it pretty much like . . . all suites are very big rooms, and then it’s going to be very expensive, probably.
- WN: It’s not that old, though, right?
- WO: Yeah, the talk is—like I said, hearsay, is it’s going to be about \$1,000 a night. You know, you live over here, you’re sort of a little bit removed. I just got invited to a meeting [on O‘ahu] yesterday, but didn’t go, with the State Historic Preservation Division. I would have had to go over Sunday, because 8:30 [Monday] was the meeting out at Ko Olina at the Disney Resort. When I looked, the cheapest room at that place is nearly \$500.
- WN: That’s the [Disney] Aulani [Resort and Spa], yeah?
- WO: Yeah. (Chuckles)
- WN: I haven’t been there.
- WO: So, it’s like, oh, I got to stay overnight. I told them, “Well, you know, if I had more notice, I probably could have stayed with one of my friends.” I have a friend that lives in Mililani, so that’s a lot closer. Plus, you don’t have to deal with traffic going that direction. And then they said, “Oh, and SHPD doesn’t have money to pay expenses now.” So . . . (Chuckles)
- WN: Getting back, you were talking about *O-bon*.
- WO: Yeah.
- WN: Was that a very big thing when you were growing up?
- WO: Oh, yes. When I was growing up, it was pretty big. Had lot more Japanese people, and especially had the kids. Now, most of the Japanese are older, and the kids, you know, have drifted away from the religion. So, I’m one of the weird ones. (Chuckles) I don’t go to church often, but I go and work with them and help out at the temple and stuff.
- WN: And today, where is the *O-bon* [held]?
- WO: There’s that field right across from the church.
- WN: It’s in that park?

- WO: It's a park, yeah. But nothing is there, so yeah, they put up the *yagura* there. But then, we don't have that many people, so usually there's a group that comes over from Maui and helps out.
- WN: And growing up, where was *O-bon*? At the church?
- WO: Over there, yeah. When I was growing up. Of course, that's another old story, but the original [Lānaʻi] Hongwanji church was where the [Lānaʻi] Union Church is. And then, World War II, it got taken away. But later, then they gave them the present location.
- WN: So, during the war, they had to close down?
- WO: Yeah, it was closed down.
- WN: The Christian church took over?
- WO: Yeah.
- WN: And after the war, the company built the new church?
- WO: I think a building was [already] there, but then they added on and made a minister's residence and stuff. Just remodeled the building that was there. So, I remember the old church; I only saw old photos and what people told me, because that was before my time. But I remember the minister at that time got interned [during World War II]. But then after he came back, then they got the other [i.e., current] place. But after that, he moved to Kauaʻi. And I remember one time, we went to play baseball, you know, Little League, and we went by his church and visited on Kauaʻi.
- WN: So today, the minister is part-time from Maui?
- WO: Yeah, once a month, a minister comes. The congregation is not big enough to support a [full-time] minister. I guess a lot of the small towns in Hawaiʻi are like that now. The population is changing. Well, you know, a lot of [sugar and pineapple] plantations closed down, and most of the churches were in plantation towns. It's the same thing when I go back to the Big Island and visit, where my grandparents are buried. I don't know if they have a church in town [i.e., Pāʻauhau], but I know the minister's residence there at that church, they rent it out, and the minister is in Honokaʻa. And I think that Lānaʻi is no different. You know, it's not as many [Buddhist] people, really, to support a church. In fact, some of the [Buddhist] churches have been converted to other religions—you know, the building and stuff, or other things. You know, you see that pretty much all over the world. I've seen, like in New Zealand, old churches, they'd sell it, and it becomes a restaurant or something like that.
- WN: So, when you were growing up, did you go to Japanese[-language] school?
- WO: I did, for a while.
- WN: Was that [run by] the church?
- WO: Yeah, the [Lānaʻi Hongwanji] church ran the Japanese school. They actually had a separate building a block away, it was like a hall. The Japanese[-language] school sponsored a Boy Scout troop.
- WN: Was that the only Boy Scout troop?

WO: Oh, no, there were two or three when I was growing up. I mean, there was a lot more activity, because even Little League baseball had four teams. Actually, right across the street here where these apartment buildings are, and then the senior housing on the other side, that whole area was a park.

WN: Oh, yeah, that's right.

WO: So, had baseball, football and all that was right over there. The whole place was a park. If you look at a lot of the old historic photographs, you know, lot of events took place there.

WN: So, growing up, what do you remember in terms of community events and celebrations, and so forth?

WO: Oh, like May Day, Aloha Week, and that kind of stuff. I think even by the time I was growing up, it wasn't as big as when I look at some of the old photographs. Seems like there were a lot more people, or a lot more people participating.

WN: In the old days?

WO: In the old days.

WN: Before your time?

WO: Yeah. Just from what I see in the photographs. You know, the town was different, too. Supposedly, this was a planned community. So you know, they had the park, the open spaces. Around the neighborhoods, they also had more recreational things. Behind right here is the housing maintenance shop and hardware store. In the old days, the whole thing was the housing maintenance. But right behind that, when I lived up the road there, right behind that . . .

WN: Behind the service station?

WO: No, between the service station and here. There was a community garage. Because when I was growing up, the yards were very small, and you didn't have a place to park a vehicle. So they had community garages. Just like a long building like stalls in the neighborhood. But right below that, they had a paved basketball court and stuff. They had that here in there around the town. The kids [today] really don't have a place to play, whereas, before, they did, because they did have these other smaller parks. I think even in Dole Park, you know, in the middle of town, on the bottom end right across from the old gym, had one of those paved parks. It was kind of split-level. But by the time we were a little bit older, the pavement was there, so that was where we roller-skated. So, all of those things disappeared over time.

WN: You know, you grew up at a time—you were coming of age when the union [i.e., International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] had come in.

WO: Yeah. Actually, little bit before my time, because I don't remember too much.

WN: Do you remember the '51 strike? You were about five years old, yeah?

WO: Not too much. I probably was oblivious (chuckles) to that.

WN: Yeah, your father was probably . . .

- WO: My father probably was management already.
- WN: Oh, I see.
- WO: So I think, yeah, we weren't too involved, my family.
- WN: Did you folks have gardens over here?
- WO: Oh, yeah. Everybody did when I was growing up.
- WN: What did you folks grow?
- WO: Oh, you know, the usual stuff, like *daikon*, radish. Of course, you know, you always had fruit. Banana, that kind of stuff. I remember our yard up there had a fig tree. But you know, head cabbage, Chinese cabbage, that kind of stuff.
- WN: Just for home use?
- WO: Home use, yeah. And then, of course, they had a lot of sharing between the families. If you had plenty, you give to them, and something they had, they would give to you. Only around the neighborhood. You know, beans, that kind of stuff. I remember the old days, one older Japanese man that had the tofu shop. He used to push the wagon around the neighborhood, and rang the bell, and sold tofu.
- WN: And the tofu was in water?
- WO: Yeah. And I was curious. I remember going to the shop and watching the process a little bit.
- WN: Did they have other people selling vegetables and fish, going around to the camps?
- WO: I don't remember too much of that. I remember the tofu man, because he rang the bell. Of course, we didn't have like in Honolulu, like the *manapua*, because we didn't have too many Chinese [living on Lāna'i]. Just a few. I know one guy that's visiting here, they live in Washington State now, but both he and his wife were from Lāna'i. I think they were classmates, except that eventually he went to Kam[ehameha] School. And her father owned the gas station at the time. His parents, in the old days, lived down at Kaumālapa'u Harbor, and they had a little restaurant there. When I was young, the company still had a boat that went back and forth between Kaumālapa'u and Lahaina [Maui]. I still remember my older sister used to take me, and we used to go over [to Maui] in the morning. It took a long time then, compared to now because you're closer from Mānele, but it's now a different kind of boat. And then, we'd go over. In those days, they didn't have Lahaina Harbor, so it was Māla [Wharf].
- WN: Mala, yeah.
- WO: Then, had this family that was kind of distantly related[to us], I guess, from Japan. That family ran the Lahaina branch of Emura Jewelry on Maui, and also the one store on Lāna'i. So, we'd go over there, and the old man would come pick us up, and we'd go into Lahaina town, eat lunch, usually or something like that. And then, catch the boat back in the afternoon. But they [i.e., Dole Corporation] ran the boat.
- WN: Still have a boat now, though, right?

- WO: Well, now, yeah, it is commercial. They have a ferry five times a day.
- WN: But [back then] this was [run by] the company?
- WO: Company, yeah. Pretty much everything was run by the company. In fact, the barge to ship the pineapples to the cannery [on O‘ahu] was [owned by the] company, too. That was Dole.
- WN: So, the boat you guys rode to Lahaina, was that only for passengers, or was that for freight and other things, too?
- WO: Both, yeah. The exciting thing for me, I guess because the boat was not going too fast, they used to put fishing lines. So, I used to stay in the back and watch, and then a button would buzz that they had a bite. (Chuckles) So, when I was a kid, that was the exciting thing for me, to wait there and be the one that pushed the button. I talked about those people that had the restaurant [at Kaumālapa‘u]. Later, they moved into town. All the people that lived down at Kaumālapa‘u [eventually] moved into town. Then the family was running the old hotel.
- WN: Hotel Lāna‘i?
- WO: Yeah, until they moved away eventually. But they had a cage in the back that had some monkeys down at the harbor. I still remember the same thing at Kawaihae on the Big Island, had the cage with monkeys. (Chuckles) For some reason, those captains liked monkeys or something. (Chuckles) I thought it was the family, because they ran that little restaurant and the cage was right in back of that restaurant building. But he said, no, one of the boat captains brought the monkeys.
- WN: You were talking about Little League baseball. What else had in terms of organized recreation?
- WO: Oh, you know, had Boy Scouts. And summertime, they always had a Summer Fun program. You know, once a week or something, they would load us up in the pineapple truck, take us down the beach. So, you mean organized kind, yeah? So, had Boy Scouts, had Little League, and in the summertime they had the Summer Fun program. And later, had a guy here, I don’t know exactly what his job was. He had an office in the old gym. He was teaching leatherworking. So, we could go over there, pay for the stuff, and make like a belt with a design. You had to kind of cut little bit and then stamp the design on. I remember a lot of people had horses those days. I guess a carryover from when the [Lāna‘i] Ranch—because the ranch ended when I was still pretty young. I remember the one guy made a saddle with all the designs and stuff. So, you know, from time to time, had different things going on.
- WN: You said you would be loaded onto the pineapple truck. What was that like, riding the truck? I mean, what did a pineapple truck look like? Was it like flatbed in the back?
- WO: Well, but they had a bin where the pineapple went in. So, when we were little kids, we could hardly look out, because the bin would have probably been maybe like the doorway here.
- WN: That’s the height of the bin?
- WO: Yeah, maybe little bit shorter.
- WN: Five feet high?

- WO: Or maybe little shorter. Because when they [transported] the pineapple, after it's halfway filled, they would put down boards. I mean, they were all attached, hinges and stuff. And they would put the [boards] down so that—because the weight would crush the pineapple. So, they would fill half, put the partition down, and [then add] the top half. We rode in the truck in summers when we worked pineapple field, like high school time, that's how we rode, in one of those trucks.
- WN: What was your job like? So, around fifteen, you could work in the fields? Did everybody do that?
- WO: Pretty much, most people did.
- WN: So, you were already at Mid-Pac by the time you started working in the summer? What kind of work did you do?
- WO: Well, mostly picking pineapple. Because those days, that was the peak season for pineapple, summertime. I guess Honolulu too, right? The guys go work in the cannery. The private schools got out like one week before the public schools. So, I would be home. And then, the other summers, maybe one week, I would pick pineapples. Then I started working with the field survey crew the last couple of years I was working.
- WN: What did you guys do?
- WO: Well, or course, you're still labor. When they plowed the fields, they just plowed the whole thing, [dirt] roads and everything. So then, they had to lay out the roads again. They had a guy with a transit, and we're the ones with the bags with the sticks and (chuckles) marking them so that they would lay out the fields again and the roads again. In the old days, the pineapple fields were all contoured, but the roads weren't straight. Eventually, they started making the roads all straight and just making the ditches along the contour to drain the water. It was easier for the picking if everything's straight. They don't have to maneuver around the curves.
- WN: So, I guess that was a good job for you.
- WO: Yeah, it was in the daytime, too. Otherwise, a lot times if you're picking pineapple, you're working nighttime, which was okay sometimes. I remember one of my friends, he's a couple years older, we worked night shift. He had a boat, so we'd go fishing. Wake up early, go fish for several hours. And had lots of fish those days. So, maybe we'd catch forty, fifty *aku*.
- WN: Wow.
- WO: And he used to sell 'em fifty cents for one. (Chuckles)
- WN: Where did he sell them?
- WO: In town, you know, to people. Then go home, take a nap, and go back work during the night. (Chuckles)
- WN: Not bad a life.
- WO: Yeah. Of course, when we were adults, we would sell the fish to the market, and the market would sell the fish [to their customers].
- WN: Like Richard's [Shopping Center]?

- WO: He might have sold some to Richard's. I sold mostly to Pine Isle [Market]. I think he did too, eventually, mostly.
- WN: I'm wondering; with everybody having gardens, and then you guys could go fishing . . .
- WO: Fishing.
- WN: Go hunting . . .
- WO: Hunting, yeah.
- WN: What did the stores sell?
- WO: Well, you know, regular stuff.
- WN: Canned goods?
- WO: Canned goods, sugar, rice, flour. One summer, I went summer school [on O'ahu], because I didn't have enough time [during the regular school year] to fit in what I had wanted to take. So, I took—I think was Algebra II. But Mid-Pac didn't have summer school, so I stayed with relatives and I went summer school at 'Iolani [School]. So, summer was gone by the time I came back [to Lāna'i]. So then, I went to work for Pine Isle [Market], because by then I had a driver's license. Those days, they had delivery and they had credit. People call 'em up, "I want this, this, this, this," and they package it all up, and we used to deliver it to the houses. And especially like bread and milk, probably was once a week. People usually had a set order. So, we would go around town delivering.
- WN: So, they would come into the store to make the order? The customers.
- WO: Or telephone.
- WN: You guys didn't go out to the houses to take orders?
- WO: No. And then usually, the milk and bread, like that, they had a standing order every time. You know, maybe a couple cartons milk, loaf of bread, or two loaves of bread. They had a standing order. So, you get a list, and you kind of plot out a route, then you got to deliver. So, you know, things were little different. When I was in high school, they still were doing things the old plantation way. And [the store would] just keep a record of what you bought, and on payday, people will pay them. Except it was not the company[-owned] store now; it was a privately-owned store.
- WN: When you guys worked in the summers, did you join the union?
- WO: No. That's why we got paid less. (Chuckles) No, we were different, because seasonal.
- (Civil defense siren sounds; taping stops, then resumes.)
- WN: So, what was school like for you? When you were going [to school on Lāna'i, before you went to Mid-Pac.
- WO: What was school like? School. (Chuckles) Of course, you know, was different from now. I notice now, a lot of times the parents drive the kid. Not everybody, but some of them drive the kids to

school, pick them up in the afternoon. Our days, everybody walked. In fact, even the men walked to go to work.

WN: They walked there, and then they get trucked over to the fields?

WO: Yeah, the fields or some of them who worked in the shops, they were right there. Had a lot of people that worked in the shop, so it was fairly close. So, like them, they never brought lunch. They'd go home and eat lunch. I know my dad used to do that; he used to go home and eat lunch. If you work in the fields, you got to take lunch.

WN: What about when you guys were working, summertime?

WO: Same thing. You got to bring your lunch, because they're not going to bring you back to town. Too far. (Chuckles) Usually, they give you half hour for lunch, so no more time to come back to town. You're out in the fields.

WN: Right. When you were—you had to be fifteen to work. Is that something you looked forward to doing?

WO: I don't know if it was so much that. But everybody was expected to do it. I don't know about other people, but for me, I was forced to save the money. I couldn't just take that money and go spend it. But then, the later years, like by the time I was a senior or so, I think I made enough money to pay half of my Mid-Pac tuition.

WN: Tell me about Mid-Pac. What was it like for a Lānaʻi boy to come to Honolulu and go school?

WO: Oh, it was a big change for me, you know. I think I was kind of shy and so you got to get used to it. I didn't really want to go the first year, but I got sent. (Chuckles)

WN: This is sophomore year?

WO: Freshman year, I got sent. But after the first year, you make friends, so then it was okay.

WN: Did your father ever tell you why you were going to Mid-Pac?

WO: Well, supposedly, you're going to get a better education. But I think that all depends on the person and the parents. Because one of my good friends here graduated from Lānaʻi High [and Elementary] School, then went to college in Montana. He was an athlete and competitive and everything, and he eventually was a CEO of a high-tech company. His salary was \$750,000 a year. I used to tell him he was my public school poster child. (Chuckles) So, I think while there is an advantage [in attending a private school], if you are that kind of personality, you will succeed even going to public school.

WN: I guess the debate rages on, yeah, whether or not private school or public school.

WO: I think you have a little bit more exposure going to a private school. Because public schools have to keep everybody. When I was at Mid-Pac, especially senior year, some of the students were already going UH [University of Hawaiʻi] and taking some college-level classes. Because if you just walk across the road, you're on the UH [campus]. So, there was that opportunity, which you know, you wouldn't have had here. But like I said, you know, it didn't matter. We still had people

from Lānaʻi that became doctors, or engineers, or whatever. So, I don't think it was really a detriment to go to a public school.

WN: And you talked about adjustments you had to make when you went to Honolulu.

WO: Yeah.

WN: Like what?

WO: Well, you know, you live in a dormitory. And freshman year there were three of us in one room. You got two people you don't know, you got to live with them. So, it takes a while to adjust to that.

WN: And they were from different parts of Hawai'i, yeah?

WO: Yeah. I think, my roommates freshman year, I think one was from Kahuku, and the other one was from country, too, someplace I don't remember exactly. But had Honolulu kids, too. You know, everybody boarded, like I told you before. So, that was the adjustment. The other adjustment was that, you know, school was little bit different and little bit stricter. Some people left after one year, but usually, the weed-out is the sophomore year. After two years, you hope your parents don't get the letter that, "Oh, I don't think your child is suited." (Chuckles) Which happened to people, you know. (Chuckles) So, I think when we started freshman year, we had over 100 people, and when we graduated we had, I think, 81 in our class. (Chuckles)

WN: People get homesick, too, right?

WO: Yeah, you do. You know, that first freshman year, that was an adjustment. And for me, when I went away, especially when I went to California [for college] after high school, very homesick. So homesick that I came home. (Chuckles)

WN: So, was there anything you remember that you had to change in terms of who you are, going from Lānaʻi to Honolulu? You had to talk different, or anything like that?

WO: You know, you got to make new friends. Plus, it was pretty regimented. I mean, they can't force you to study, but in the dormitory, like every night, you had three hours of study hall. You had to be at your desk, you couldn't be lying on your bed or sleeping, because maybe a faculty member would be walking around. I mean, it wasn't three hours straight. You had a break in between, ten or fifteen minutes. So, it ended up being forty-five or fifty minutes. A bell rang, you had to be at the desk. The bell rang, you had your break. Bell rang, you had to be at your desk. You know, lights-out half hour after the study hall ends. Morning time, you got to get up and do whatever, get dressed, go to breakfast. After breakfast, you got a job. You got to clean your own room. Even the hallway, the bathroom, everybody took turns having to do that. And then, there were [students attending Mid-Pacific Institute] on they called it "work scholarship." If you applied, and your parents didn't have the income or something, you would work in the dining hall or in the wood shop. They had different things, such as gathering the trash and taking it to the dumpster from the dormitories. So every day, you worked in the dining room during the meals, or other things like that.

WN: What about Honolulu; what was the city like for you?

WO: Well, maybe one weekend a month, we had a free weekend where we could leave. But otherwise, you were at the school, so the city was Mō'ili'ili for me. (Chuckles)

WN: Not Downtown?

WO: Walking distance. yeah. Not too much Downtown. Plus, you know, if you were going to do that, you had to have enough time. You would have to catch the bus. We did a little bit of that, you know, maybe senior or junior year. But basically, it was just Mō'ili'ili. That was our world. We'd walk through the UH campus, get down to that intersection at Dole and University, walk down. So, you know, Varsity Theater and a few other places around there. Usually, you don't have too much money to go eat out. The old days was College Inn, on the corner, Dole [Street] and University [Avenue]. Maybe stop for a Coke and French fries. That's the most you're going to do. But until later years, there was not too much to Honolulu outside of that.

WN: Okay, almost done.

WO: Okay.

WN: Let's see. You know, this is the house that you grew up in, and you're living here, you remodeled it really nicely and so forth. What is it about Lāna'i that keeps you on Lāna'i? I mean, lot of people move out.

WO: Lot of people move out.

WN: You're here. Why is that?

WO: Oh, I just like Lāna'i. You know, even like the truck parked on the street, most of the time, the keys are in the truck. You know, even nighttime, it's not locked. We don't lock our doors, usually. Usually, if we're leaving the island, we get somebody to come stay and feed the dog. But it's still pretty crime-free, and people, you get to be good friends. You know, neighbors. I like to go fishing and hunting. I just like the lifestyle and living here. More relaxing. No more traffic. (Chuckles)

WN: What would you like to see as for the future of this place?

WO: Well, you know, a lot of people, they're saying, "Oh, now that Larry Ellison is coming, he's going to make everything nice." But he's not going to just throw his money away. So, I think the community has to be involved in more than just asking, "Oh, give us this, give us that." Things are always going to be more expensive. You know, gasoline, groceries, whatever. They have to ship 'em in, yeah? It's another cost that's added in. And you know, sometimes it's inconvenient. You want something, you go to the store, but they ran out. You know, like sometimes I want to do something around the house. I go to the hardware store. Same thing, they ran out. But to me, that balances out with the things that we do have here. I like historic preservation. This house didn't qualify because it's two houses stuck together in the first place, moved from the original location, and we added on. But you know, basically, the window openings are the same. We tried to keep that plantation [look]. But it's vinyl.

WN: Yeah, no jealousies.

WO: You know, the kitchen is different, but most of the other rooms, the windows, we tried to keep the look. Especially this part that's viewed from outside. So, you know, while you can modernize and

stuff, I still like the look. And I wish they hadn't taken away some of the park spaces and stuff being around, because I think it was good for the community.

WN: You folks are unique in the sense that Ellison now, and before that, Murdock, your fate is sort of tied to one person.

WO: Right.

WN: As opposed to like us in Honolulu. You know, we say, "Well, the governor does this or the Legislature and so forth." But it seems like you folks are always Ellison or Murdock.

WO: Well, but we grew up like that. Actually, Murdock bought Dole. So we were still under—it was still a one-horse town, even before. And you know, when we were growing up, like up the hill was always called "*Haole* Camp." You know, the management. But I think my father built a relationship with them. Because I remember, Japanese style, New Year's, my mother would make all the food and people would come. You would go house-to-house to share some food and drink. The managers used to come to our house. When my mother passed away seven years ago, later that Christmas, a Christmas card came from this one manager. Not the top manager, but one of the managers who was probably above my father. And he sent a Christmas card.

But a lot of the other people I know, they felt inferior or like, "Oh, the *haoles* took advantage of you," or something. But my father didn't have that kind of relationship. And I'm not talking about the laborer guys, I'm talking about people that their parents were the same level as my father. Some of them still have this little bit of animosity, which our family didn't. In fact, there was a time when my mother, before she started working at the post office, she used to go and do maid work at one of the manager's houses. You know, clean house and do laundry. I don't think my family looked at that as demeaning. It was a job, you know. And then, you know, you make out of it what you make out of it. I think it's sad that people have that little bit of animosity, still. I mean, my generation, you know. And it's interesting because, like I just—second time around in reading this book by Ruth Tabrah. She became Buddhist, a *haole* lady.

WN: Right, right.

WO: And you know, the same thing. Hers was opposite, because all the *haoles* were telling her, "How come you're going to the Japanese church?" You know. (Chuckles) And that kind of stuff. So, that was the reverse, right? Then maybe also when I was a kid, sometimes I was the token local to the birthday parties up at the *Haole* Camp.

WN: Oh, you used to go?

WO: Yeah, couple of them. The ones that were my classmates.

WN: But you felt comfortable?

WO: Well, it was little bit different, the customs and everything were different. But yeah, I was okay. And I went more than once, so I never really had that kind of animosity. I still remember one time—and we were like elementary school, young yet. And they were kind of [picking] on one of the *haole* boys, and, well, I never participated. I mean, I never had that animosity. Maybe that's why I was oblivious when they had the strike. Of course, I was still four or five years old then. But you know, I've had times when people told me, "Oh, you're friends with that *haole* guy."

And I said, “Yeah.”

They said, “How come?”

And I said, “Well, we’re friends, you know, and if you have a problem with him, that’s between you and him. But don’t drag me into problems, because then we’re not going to be friends.” But that’s just my personality, and I think if the person is my friend and we treat each other nice, we like each other, what difference does it make whether he’s *haole*, Filipino, Chinese, Korean?

Whereas, I think in the old days, there was the separation. And I think the plantations did that on purpose, yeah? Because I still remember the Korean Camp was down that end. One of the older [residents] is half Korean, half Hawaiian, and I talked to him.

He said, “My father worked at the ranch and my mother was Hawaiian.” He said the adult Koreans kind of looked down on him, because he was mixed blood. You know, the Japanese were same thing in the old days. So, I don’t know; I just never had that kind of animosity in me.

WN: Growing up in a community with so many different nationalities, yeah, that’s . . .

WO: But you know, even . . . the older generation did, you know, like my parents.

WN: So, you’re very active with the Lāna‘i Culture and Heritage Center. Why are you involved in that? What compels you to do that?

WO: Well, I think I just was interested in that kind of stuff. You know, originally, when I was going to school, I thought, maybe I’d be an engineer or architect. But then, I don’t know, after a while, I got tired of math and science, you know. So, eventually when I went back to school, I did anthropology, so I’m more interested people kind of things. So, that’s right down my alley. (Chuckles) Even though I didn’t do that as my job, you know, it was always my interest.

WN: So, what is the important mission of the center?

WO: It’s to preserve the history and the culture [of Lāna‘i], the different [ethnic groups and their cultures]. There’s the Hawaiian [history], and they’re trying to preserve all the plantation [history] also, and family histories and stuff like that. You know, like we saved, they were going to throw away all the employee cards from the pineapple plantation, so we have those. And slowly digitizing them, so when somebody comes, “Oh, my grandfather worked here.” We still have a lot more to get into the system but . . .

WN: So, what’s on those cards? Like what kind of information?

WO: The name, sex, were they a [U.S.] citizen, were they married, if they had children, how many children, what their job was, what their pay was.

WN: The years that they worked?

WO: Well, usually, it was just when they started, because most of them—after that, they didn’t do that already.

WN: So, you guys have all of the cards?

WO: Just for that period of time, not all, I'm sure. The very early part, I don't think they kept records like that. But then, you know, one lady gave us the actual metal . . .

WN: *Bangō*.

WO: *Bangō*. That was her husband's. And I just think that it's something that we don't really want to forget or let everybody forget. You know, like for instance, on Saturday, I went with the [Lāna'i] Hongwanji group to Keōmoku side, where [Maunalei Sugar Company operated between 1898 and 1901]. There's a Japanese cemetery. So once a year, about *O-bon* time, we'll just clean up, rake up all the rubbish, try to cut back the *kiawe* and stuff. None of us were related to those people, but, you know, they passed away. I think the records show about seventy-eight Japanese laborers passed away during the two- or three-year span on that plantation. And, you know, buried in a foreign land, never got to go back. So, I think just a little respect. That's part of the heritage of Lāna'i.

WN: So, when someone visits the center, what do you want them to come out with?

WO: We want them to come out with, you know, what you see today is not necessarily what it always was. I mean, of course, it's greatly changed. No more pineapple now, but history goes back beyond, like say, at the time of European contact, we estimate that the Hawaiian population on Lāna'i was about 6,000 people. Even today, one of the guys that I correspond with, said, "I don't think people lived in that area, you know, that northwest end of the island. How can people live there? No water."

But I said, "First of all, you weren't there then. And then second of all, they [Native Hawaiians] didn't live like us. They never had a tap they opened, the water, let it run, wash your hand, take shower, the water is all running. They didn't live like that. They had to conserve what resources they had. You know, they probably never took a bath every day. There's accounts of some of the people would go out early in the morning and gather the dew from the grass."

I know that's possible, because when I worked out there doing archeological surveys, early in the morning sometimes you walk and you get soaking wet walking in the grass. So, there is enough water. If you were, you know, water short, you could collect enough water to survive. And you know, they didn't go supermarket and buy food, right? They had to catch fish or whatever from the ocean to eat. In those areas, no more regular water, so during the rainy season you planted whatever would grow, and that's how they lived. Then, the other times, they would trade. And people didn't have roads in those days. They walked.

I still remember when I lived in the old house before we moved to this house, there was a man that lived right up the road. He used to walk from town to Kaunolū to go fishing. I mean, people did things like that, you know. You never drive right to the place where you went fishing. Of course, later, they had horses and stuff, but still, you know, they didn't live like we do. They didn't have a store to buy stuff. You know, everything was subsistence. Their living was not working for somebody, earning money, and buying. You fished, you raised whatever you could, like vegetables. And if you didn't have, you might have to trade with somebody that did have. So I think that we should appreciate how people had to live, because we have it easy. Those days, if you never work, you don't get. No more welfare. You don't work, you get kicked out. (Chuckles)

So, I think it's good for people to learn about things like that. We have the ledger from the Maunalei Sugar Company, at the center. And it's opened to a page in the display case where the top line on the right side, the guy, in one month, earned thirty dollars. But you know, when they

came from Japan, they had no money, right? They probably owed money for whatever they bought from the company store. I don't know about then, but the guy, after he paid his bill off for the month, he got dollar fifty cents [\$1.50]. That was his leftover at the end of the month. So, I mean, it's going to be an ongoing thing until they can save enough to pay off and actually keep the money. I know a lot of the later ones [i.e., immigrants], they actually had to pay for their passage coming from Japan. That got taken out of their wages, too.

WN: Not much money ended up in their pockets.

WO: Not very much. Like I said, so when you figure how long it would take to work down the debt, it would have been kind of difficult, I think. I think the younger generation, like my kids and younger, they're spoiled, but I was spoiled too, you know. I mean, you compare to when our grandparents came, and our parents were growing up.

WN: Right, right. Well, it's a good thing that you guys are active in that culture center. It's important.

WO: I think so. That's why I do it. (Chuckles)

WN: I think we're done.

WO: We're done.

WN: Thank you so much.

WO: Oh, thank you.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Lāna‘i:

Reflecting on the Past; Bracing for the Future

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Social Science Research Institute
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